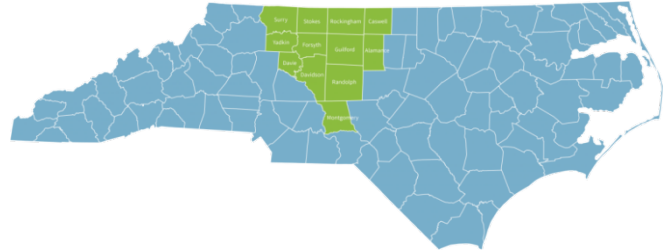


July 10, 2017

Strengthening partnerships to create a thriving, resilient community-based food system

Nearly 40 people, including representatives from eight local food councils or networks in the region, attended a Piedmont Triad Food Councils Gathering. This meeting is part of an effort to keep neighboring food councils connected, to share discoveries, and to explore regional collaborations.



## Regional Supporting Local

Last fall, Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) worked with UNC-Greensboro graduate students to complete [Harvesting Regional Potential](#), a report on the benefits and challenges for developing a regional food council. In a survey at the meeting, 65% of respondents said their food councils already were collaborating with their neighboring food councils. This collaboration is important when considering a regional approach that will work to benefit all twelve rural and urban counties.

We asked attendees how a regional food council could support their local work. Here are some responses:

- Show existing coordination to leverage resources, funding, and credibility
- Serve as an umbrella organization for writing grants and fiscal sponsor
- Broaden political and public support
- Share best practices, regional & state resources, grants, programming, and other opportunities
- Connect with other initiatives
- Identify regional economic development opportunities
- Provide focus, regional coordination, and strategic planning to continue momentum
- Provide a regional analysis for farmland preservation
- Highlight commonalities between rural and urban situations (esp. food security)
- Provide regional agricultural branding
- Research and assist with funding opportunities
- Amplify rural and urban assets and stories
- Help state-level stakeholders learn more about what's going on locally

## Food Council Happenings

We heard current work highlights from most of the nine local food councils or networks in the region. They vary in their organizational capacity, structure, and work. We were inspired to hear about 100+ kids at a Youth Food Summit, collaboration with Elon University students, and discussions about what 'local' means at farm-to-fork dinners. The food councils in the region include:

- Alamance Food Collaborative
- Caswell County Local Foods Council
- Davidson County Local Food Systems Network
- Forsyth Community Food Consortium
- Greater High Point Food Alliance
- Guilford Food Council
- Piedmont Local Foods Coalition, Rockingham County
- Randolph County, emerging
- Winston Salem Urban Food Policy Council

Learn more about these food councils and this event on the next page or at [communityfoodstrategies.org](http://communityfoodstrategies.org).

## Breakout Reflection on Regional Food Systems Assessment

This summer, PTRC began planning for a Piedmont Triad Regional Food Systems Assessment to compile and analyze data on the existing conditions and infrastructure of the Triad food system. Meeting attendees worked in small groups to give input on the Assessment. Here is a summary of their responses to the following questions:

What should be included in the Triad regional food system assessment?

### Overall

- Definition of “rural”
- Clear goals on agricultural economic development and on food security
- Input from farmers
- Relevant stakeholders
- Case studies and stories

### Asset Map

- Healthy food outlets
- Cool & cold storage
- Processing facilities

### Data

- Infrastructure capacity
- Product demand and supply
- Distribution routes
- Economics of food insecurity

### Available Resources

- University and community college benefits
- Financial resources
- Technical assistance (consultants, lawyers)

What should be included in the individual county profile?

### Overall

- Local stakeholders and locally informed vision

### Asset Maps

- Farm profiles and map
- Supply chain infrastructure - farmers markets, commercial and community kitchens
- Food deserts
- Transportation infrastructure

### Data

- Storyboard health statistics
- Revenue streams
- Farm and production data

### Available Resources

- Technology advice
- Beneficial programs and available funding opportunities

How would you use a regional food assessment?

- To inspire regional projects and collaborations
- To share lessons learned (what has or hasn't worked)
- To identify policy gaps and funding needs - at county and regional levels
- To identify and leverage resources
- As a tool for engagement
- To identify common needs
- To identify missing investment opportunities
- To identify regional infrastructure needs
- To increase market access to local foods
- To leverage business collaboration
- To identify infrastructure gaps and unrealized economic opportunities
- As an educational resource

Who should be a part of an Advisory Council for the Regional Food Assessment?

- Large- and small-scale local growers
- Elected officials
- Health department staff
- NC Cooperative Extension
- Members of food councils
- Economic developers
- Grassroots organizations doing the work
- Community foundations (state/regional level)
- University or community college staff or researchers
- Local land trust
- Food retailers

Community Food Strategies and PTRC will continue to convene quarterly calls for food councils by region and will support the development of a Piedmont Triad Regional Food Systems Assessment with local input and leadership. The goal of a regional collaboration will be to support local work. Our next steps will involve creating an Advisory Council for the assessment using input received from attendees at this gathering.